

# **Commission on the Elimination of Poverty**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**October 28, 2009**

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### **In Attendance:**

Toni Irving-Office of the Governor (Co-Chair)  
Sid Mohn-Heartland Alliance (Co-Chair)  
Dwight Lucas-East Central Illinois Community Action Agency  
Maria Whalen-Illinois Action for Children  
Jerry Butler-Safer Foundation  
Judson Childs-Mayor of Cairo  
Cheri Ditzig-Zion Township  
Samreen Kahn-Office of the Governor  
Mike Jones-Department of Health and Family Services  
Leslie Boucree-Department of Human Rights  
Michael Golden-Illinois Education Foundation  
Lanita Kostner-Illinois State Board of Education  
Jim Hires-Eastern Illinois Food Bank  
Andy Kulczycki-Community Service Center of Northern Champaign  
Al Ridley-ICCS  
Frank McNeil-DCFS  
Wendy Pollack-Shriver Center  
Joe Antolin-HHCS  
Gaye Preston-CFW/Community Support Services  
Daniel Schwick-Luthern Social Services Illinois  
Amy Rynell-IMPACT  
Sandra Foster-African American Family Coalition  
Eithne McMenamin-Chicago Coalition for the Homeless  
Shelith Hansbro-Department of Corrections  
Grace Hou-Department of Human Services  
Billy Ocasio-Office of the Governor  
Sen. Michael Frerichs  
Grace Hong Duffin-DHS  
Robin Gabel-IL Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
Doug Schenkelberg, Gina Guillemette, Kimberly Drew-Heartland Alliance

### **On Phone:**

Marisol Morales-Latino Family Commission  
Damon Arnold-Department of Public Health  
Maureen Palmer-Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity  
Terry Solomon-African American Family Commission,  
Dennis Smith-Northern IL Food Bank,  
Laurie Mikva-Illinois Department of Employment Security  
Jonathan Perry-Park One

Rep. Karen Yarborough

- Still seeking 2 at large Steering Committee members:
  - Responsibilities? Makes certain that the work of the working committees is coordinated and works to ensure completion of final report
- Commission Background-From Poverty to Opportunity Campaign
- The Relationship Between Poverty and Human Rights
- The Commission will be uniquely guided by Human Rights principles. We all have a responsibility to fulfill Human Rights. The Commission must set measurable benchmarks.
- State has a particular interest in addressing extreme poverty not only because it is the right thing to do but because poverty issues are connected to so many other concerns and this mission is articulated in the state Constitution's preamble.
- Guiding Principles:
  - Progressive Realization
  - Use of all available resources
  - Engage impacted populations
  - All solutions should affirm dignity

Amy Rynell's presentation (see PowerPoint)

\*Al Ridley-Interested in trend data on Extreme Poverty in Illinois

- Based on the inadequacy of the current FPL should the commission re formulate a definition of extreme poverty?-Steering committee should make that decision but should consider using other measures to mark our impact/progress (ex. food insecurity).
- Immigration status-poverty data does not include undocumented individuals-may be an under-represented population experiencing extreme poverty. (Poverty data represents individuals who are foreign-born and living in isolated areas.)
- To explore further: mental health/disability- connections to homelessness
- Considering that the data on the number of people who are homeless does not include individuals/families who are doubled up as homeless-numbers are extremely conservative.
- Single adults left out of many safety net programs!!
- Forecasting models: if unemployment reaches 10%-35,000 more people will become homeless? Unemployment has exceeded 10% in Illinois.
- Yarborough-35,000 are leaving incarceration each year (1/2 go back to Chicago-most people return to the county where they were originally incarcerated) 6 communities in Chicago: Humboldt Park, West Garfield Park, Englewood, Lawndale  
51.3% recidivism rate

Additional requests for data:

- \*Marisol-\$ that goes to school districts (per/pupil spending) –correlation with extreme poverty rate
- \*Chronic poverty-Where are these families located?
- \*Dynamics of acute poverty-individuals/families moving out and entering poverty. What are the life events/triggers?
- \*Top 10 school districts with extreme poverty rates. (Dennis has rates of free and reduced school lunch for 13 counties they serve-from ISBE)

Toni's research citizenship-the way individuals access entitlements.

Committee Chairs: Maria, Dwight, Al  
 Living with Dignity (those unable to work-children, seniors): Dwight  
 Making work Accessible (re-entry, chronically homeless): Al  
 Making work Pay (immigrants, those in need of retraining): Maria

At-large positions: Terry Solomon, Damon Arnold,

- We should encourage the inclusion of individuals from DHS on each committee-lots of state agency participation-not just representation.
- Calendar overview (See handout). Commission chairs will identify dates for full commission meetings for the coming year and send out for members to put on their calendars.

*Public Hearings:*

- Overlap with areas with high concentrations of extreme poverty. Goals: to draw attention to issues & have impacted populations participate.
- The public hearings will be scheduled during the coldest months of the year and transportation is a barrier: How do we ensure maximum participation of impacted populations?

*Staff and funding:*

- There is none.
- Heartland Alliance staff and Samreen from the Governor's office will be staffing the Commission
- DHS has regional staff and the Commission should look to the department as a resource.
- Meeting space at DHS offices-video conferencing should be considered available resources.

- \*Outcomes from Poverty Summit will be available to Working Groups
- \*If there is a committee that you think you are better suited to contact Doug or Samreen to be reassigned.
- \*\*Maximum participation should be encouraged.
- \*Email recommendations for committee members to Samreen or Doug.

*Other items to consider:*

- Commission is required to receive public comment.
- Bringing front line agency workers to the working committees (focus groups)- their input is invaluable.